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"Reviews and Information on Japanese Animation Software"

ISSUE 16 12/7/1991

This is the 16th in a series of files of comments and reviews of anime (Japanese animation) items that we have bought. Please direct all comments to us by E-mail or post us a message. We also welcome any reviews, artwork, or comments you would like to have included in the next ANIME STUFF issue.

The ANIME STUFF Staff...

- Tom Mitchell : Publisher, Graphics, CompuServe & GENie Distributor
CompuServe Address : 75156,1067
GENie Address : TOM-M
- Masaki Takai : Writer & BBS System Distributor
CompuServe Address : 75106,3257
- Mike & Janet Naylor : Writers
CompuServe Address : 76074,1631
- Rick Sternbach : Anime Modeler, Writer
CompuServe Address : 74616,526
- Jude George : USENET Consultant, Writer
CompuServe Address: 72307,1752
USENET Address : jg2f@andrew.cmu.edu
- Barry Brown : INTERNET Distributor
INTERNET Address : >INTERNET:barry@network.ucsd.edu
- Albert Wong : Writer, Index Research
CompuServe Address: 72657,2103
Internet Address: Albertw@chips.com,
72657.2103@compuserve.com,
Prodigy Address: WJTM10B

Contributing Authors for this Issue:

- Maiko Covington
INTERNET Address: ecovingt@sdcc13.ucsd.edu

////////////////////QUICK NOTE\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Once again, another issue of Anime Stuff. We've been on a long hiatus. Mainly because I've been very busy with school and work again. But also because I've recently moved into a new computer. Yep, another Macintosh user has joined the ranks! I'm really enjoying this machine!

This issue continues Maiko Covington's fascinating look at Japanese school life in the Anime Life section. And of course there are some more reviews. There are also a lot of things I held off writing about this time because of space and time considerations. Bubblegum Crash is in full swing, and getting mixed reviews. I want to comment on it after I get to see the final episode. And remember in the last issue when I said I'd review Iczer-3? Well forget it. It was pretty disappointing. It could have been a wildly silly and action filled wrestling romp, but the director, Hirano of all folks, blows his own sequel by getting conservative and staging an Iczer-1 reunion that spoils everything. It became another in the long recent line of terribly executed sequels to classic anime. Perhaps it's a good thing that we have yet to see more Area 88 or Vampire Hunter D. Now I'm sorta scared I got what I wished for; Macross revived as an OAV series. (Please don't mess this one up!!!)

And no more Kimagure Orange Road videos. Too bad. I hope we see some done again, as there are a few stories in the manga that have not been done yet. Perhaps we'll see the story continue one day too. Until then, us KOR fans will just have to make due with what we've got; one of the best romantic comedies made. I review the last three KOR releases in this issue. They are all very good.

In the space of time between now and the last issue, I managed to find my

Ja ne!

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////////////////////////ANIME LIFE\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

* * *

Hello again, and hisasiburi ^^_. I am finally finished with my finals and have time to post again. I hope this post lives up to whatever expectations you may have, and I am truly sorry for keeping everyone waiting so long to get this out. Again I offer my standard disclaimer:
I

have had no training whatsoever in sociology or related fields – all comments offered here are strictly my own.

ENGLISH CLASS

I am sure most of you have heard that all Japanese students take six years of English – three in junior high and three in high school.

Most of

you have probably also wondered at one time or another why these same people often cannot speak English well. The answer most likely lies in

the way the English class is carried out. Read on, and you may discover

something! I will center my discussion on high school English for now.

At

my high school, there were three kinds of English class – Reading, 'I,II,or IIIB' (depending on what year you were), and Grammar. The Reading class and the 'B' class were just about the same as far as I could

tell, except that we had different readers. Both the classes used a small

paperback reader (all Japanese textbooks are small cheap paperbacks) with

various stories in it. Most of the stories ranged from 5 to 6 pages, with

fairly big print. The text is all in English, but on the bottom of each

page the words that are new are defined in Japanese. Grammar patterns are

also explained in the margin, in exceedingly small letters. Most of my

friends, though, relied heavily on a dictionary when reading the text. At

the end of each story was a half-page or so description of the story content. Oh yah – all of the new words introduced were accompanied by International Phonetic Symbol transliteration, so that you could tell how

to pronounce the word. Those of you with English to Japanese dictionaries

will note that this is the same system used to give the pronunciation of

English words in the dictionary.

The class itself consisted of endless repetition of the sentences in the

book. In my Reading class, the teacher (who was Japanese) would read out

loud one sentence from the story, and then the class would repeat it.

Then, the teacher would call on someone to read that same sentence and translate it into Japanese. In Japanese school, calling on students

often
isn't random – the teacher will proceed down the row, calling on each person in turn. So, everybody would count the people left ahead of him or her and prepare the one sentence he knew he would have to translate in front of the class. This led to frantic consultations with friends before class to make sure of the translation for that one sentence. Most people would therefore not know the translation for the rest of the story. Sometimes, though, the teacher would just read all the sentences and their Japanese translations to the class. In that case, everyone would hurriedly write down the exact words she said over the text as she read it. I always was amazed at her translating abilities, until I found out that in the teacher's edition the Japanese translation is printed above the text in red! On a similar note, though, in Japan you can get the 'guide' to just about all textbooks. The guide has all the answers to the questions at the end of the story, the Japanese meaning, and drills in it. Most homework in Japan is not printed in the textbook. It comes instead on newsprint sheets xeroxed by the teacher, which are called "prints". That way, you cannot get the answers anywhere. Also, some classes use workbooks, which are ordered en masse from the publishing company. The publishing company will not sell the answer key to students. All of this helps keep the textbooks small.

Each Friday, we had a spelling test in the Reading class. The teacher would read an English word, and we would have to (1) spell it, and (2) write out the meaning in Japanese. The tests were printed on newsprint too. Exams (by this I mean tyuukan siken –midterms– and kimatukousa –finals–) consisted of fill in the blank type questions about the story, English passages which you had to answer questions about (this is the sort of thing that is on the college entrance exam) and verb conjugation drills. By verb conjugation drills, I mean problems like this: I () some comic books, but I had no money. (buy) where you have to put the correct conjugation of the verb in the parentheses. In this case, it would be 'would have bought'. Japanese students spend lots of time memorizing

the rules for this. We also have these 'word cards' which are mini 3x5 cards attached to a ring. On each you write a word you have to memorize.

Similar to this are 'word books' which are tiny notebooks with paper printed so there is a place for the 'foreign word', 'pronunciation', and 'Japanese meaning'.

The grammar class was different. Instead of a reader, we had a grammar book (obviously) which had a different grammar problem explained on each page. The teacher would read the example sentences and their translations, and then call on people to do the questions in the book. These were standard type grammar drills, and verb conjugation problems like those I mentioned above. The entire book was devoted to the memorization of complicated rules for deciding what pattern to use when.

For instance, there is a whole chapter devoted to different ways to say 'if'. I liked the reading classes better than grammar class. People would write down all these rules in notebooks. Most Japanese students take notes in these thin notebooks, with pictures on the front (of anime characters, etc). We use one for each class, and people organize their notes elaborately with colored pens and highlighting and the whole bit. I suppose this helped in grammar class.

Basically, there was no emphasis on speaking at all. Our school did have an English club, though, where you could practice speaking drills and listening to tapes. Each Friday the English Club would show a video of an American movie without subtitles. I joined the club just so I could see these. On another note, in junior high the English class involved more speaking, although it was still centered largely around rote repetition of drills in the textbook. It was my bad fortune to go to a school with no native English speaking English teachers. I am very happy about programs they have in some schools now where a native speaker leads conversation practice and discussions. One of the main faults with the speaking programs they do have, though, is that when a student makes the slightest

grammatical mistake while speaking the teacher (usually a non-native) will come down hard saying 'that's wrong, that's wrong!'. I think more emphasis needs to be put on communication and not grammar. But, that is just my humble opinion ^_^. At my school, we were taught that there is a difference between 'I am going to eat now' and 'I will eat now' but the students couldn't say what it was they had for lunch.

MY INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES WITH ENGLISH CLASS (this section may be more interesting)

I am a native English speaker. As such, I had a few different experiences in the English class. First of all, having to learn the alphabet in 7th grade was humiliating at best. They made us all use that 'English paper' with the ----- pattern.

- - - - -

Well, this was the kind of paper I had to use in kindergarten, so I hated having to use it. So, I would purposely write really messy to spite the teacher.

Secondly, whenever I would say something in a regular English voice, two things would happen. (1) my classmates would practically fall on the floor saying "Your English is S000 good!!". The teacher would do this too.

Sometimes the teacher would ask me to say something out loud just to hear

my accent. I didn't like it too much, because nobody wants to stand out.

But, I did rather like it that I could speak fluent English and others couldn't. (2) the upper classmen (tyuu 3) would complain that I made them

look bad. They said I had to start speaking like them. As a result, I can

speak perfect Japanese accented English ^_^. I would go around saying "Mai neemu izu maiko" like that. The funny thing is, though, people are

so used to hearing that sort of thing that they didn't think I was speaking funny at all!

Most of my teachers were nice and willing to acknowledge the fact that my English was better than theirs. If they had a question, they would ask

me, usually after or before class. These teachers would call on me

just
like they called on everyone else (although I would usually read my
part
in "Japanese English"), and if they made a mistake during lecture,
they
would respond positively to my correction. I had to be careful how I
phrased the comments though – I had to be sure to say "...jya nai
desyou
ka" like that so they wouldn't get embarrassed. The teacher would
then
look up the word or pattern in the dictionary, correct HIMSELF, and
all
would be well. I have respect for these teachers. I can think of one
notable exception, though. My high school IIB teacher would never call
on
me. He'd call on the person in front of me, then on the person in
back,
skipping me altogether. This went on for months. After a while I
resigned
myself to the fact that I wasn't going to be called on, and I started
to
read manga or novels under the desk, write notes, etc. (I had read the
entire reader in 10 minutes on the first day). Well, one day I was
reading a new Star Trek novel my friend had sent from Hawaii, when he
came
over to my desk, slammed the meterstick down (making a horrible slap!
noise) and yelled, "what do you think you're doing??? This is English
class" (but in Japanese) at me. Without thinking, I pointed to the
book I
was reading and said, "datte, eigo desyou? (but isn't this English?).
BAD
move. I got in so much trouble for that.... That guy also never
would
respond to constructive criticism outside of class, even before the
abovementioned incident. And he talked differently from the other
teachers. It was almost as if in order to show he knew how to say the
'r'
sound, he would attach it to every word.

My friends were constantly asking me how to say this or that in
English.
I would happily tell them – even colloquial stuff. the funny thing
is,
if I told them the English in a natural accent they wouldn't
understand –
I had to say the meaning in Japanese accented English to get my point
across. This is because that is how the teachers speak, I guess. I
also
had to endure the unending "we don't believe you speak English. Say
something." requests. Well, they would ask all this in Japanese, and

it is
very hard for me to answer in English when people are speaking to me
in
Japanese. No matter what I try to say, it comes out in Japanese.
Plus, I
never knew what I should say. (I have the same problem now when people
ask
in English 'say something in Japanese!') So I would reply in
Japanese,
'what do you want me to say' and they would invariably reply
'anything'.
Finally I hit upon a solution - I would read part of the English
reader
out loud. That way they could hear my accent, and I didn't have to
think
up anything off the top of my head to say.

I used to get a big kick out of watching old 'Nightline' reruns with
the
English Club. I always thought it was neat because it showed pictures
of
the US. We also watched "little house on the prairie" and "Top Gun".

I shall continue this post later if there are readers - it is 2:30 or
so
AM and I am sleepy... Any comments may be posted to my e-mail. Thank
you
for reading this horribly long thing!

Maiko Covington maiko@ucsd.edu

Hello, this is Maiko again. This time I am going to write about yet
another event - bunkasai. Once again I offer my standard disclaimer -
I
have had no training whatsoever in sociology or related fields, so all
opinions expressed here are strictly my own. I also have a request -
many
people have been asking me to mail them copies of the Parts they have
missed, but I seem to be missing some. If someone out there has been
collecting these, would you be so kind as to send me copies of them?
Thank
you very much.

BUNKASAI

Bunkasai is an event held once each year - usually in the fall.
Literally the word 'bunkasai' translates as 'culture festival', but I
feel

this word does not do it justice...

Basically what bunkasai is is a big festival put on by the school, where you sell tickets and let outsiders in. Money raised goes to the school funds. It lasts from a few days to a week, or in some places 2 days plus a Sunday, or some like that. During this time the whole school is decorated, and each class and club puts on an 'event'. The events are basically food shops, exhibitions, games, or sales.

At both my junior high school and high school, each class and club was allotted one whole classroom or half of one, depending on what their event was to be. The first step is to decide what sort of event you would put on. Some of the ones I have done were a newspaper shredding search game, game show type things, a yakisoba stand, a maze, and, in the second and third years of high school, an ice cream stand. I was in the manga-bu (comics club) and for that, we always would (1) display our drawings and comic books we had drawn, and (2) draw things like bookmarks and postcards at people's request. These last we would sell for about 50 - 100 yen, and the drawings were either auctioned off or else sold for a higher price. Just about every school's manga-bu does this. I was also in the English club, and mostly we would have a typewriter for people to play with, and conversation going on, and maybe American TV videos. I remember in the second grade of high school we had a "mistaken English contest". What we did was take pictures of signs with bad English on them from all over Tokyo, and the person who could find all the errors would get prizes. Unfortunately, I was ineligible ^_^. The newspaper shredding search game was like this: for 50 yen people got 5 minutes in a huge classroom full up with newspaper shreddings (man, did it ever take a long time to shred those - my fingers ache with memory). We hid some stuff in there, from paper streamers to erasers to more expensive stuff like pencil boxes. Anything you found, you could keep. For the maze, we made a maze of tunnels out of cardboard boxes, and made it so that as soon as you entered the door you had to go in there. It was pitch black, and we made

ghosts
come out and stuff. Lastly for the ice cream stand we made it '21
flavors'
because we were 2 nen 1 kumi, and we bought ice cream from Meiji,
which we
sold for 50 yen or so a scoop.

Before any other preparation, there is a 'oosouzi no hi' where you
have
to clean the classroom really well and take home all the stuff like
people's old umbrellas, or else put it in your locker. This is maybe a
week beforehand. Then, you have to start making all the decorations.
Also
at this time, you are given your tickets to sell to your family and
friends who don't go to this school. Each person would get 5 tickets.
The decorations would get to be so elaborate that you almost wouldn't
know
it was a school! The first kind is, posters. For the ice cream store,
we
researched all the different ice cream chains in Tokyo, and put up a
poster about each (when it was founded, main stores, service,
specialty
etc). Also you have to make advertising posters. These are drawn on
copy
paper and then run off onto piles of newsprint. They will be handed
out
to people and also hung all over the walls and such. You make some
color
posters to hang in prominent places, and also a sign to put on the
door of
the classroom. You also have to put signs up saying where your event
is -
in room 204 or 2 nen 1 kumi or wherever. As well as posters, somebody
has
to draw a promotion to put in the annai, or guide. For the ice cream
store we had to make price lists too. This involved thinking up
original
names for all the ice cream flavors. This took a while... all of them
were
inside jokes, or plays on fads etc. For example, the vanilla was
called
"vanilla do.eijyun" because our teacher's name was Eijyun Sakaki and
he
was pale, and also because he once told us how he went to USA and
couldn't
order vanilla because everyone thought he was saying banana. The
pineapple was "ice pine cosine theta" for some reason, and etc.etc.

The next thing is to disguise the classroom. For the ice cream store,
we made crepe paper streamers for the ceiling, and made those tissue

paper
flowers (those are one of the most popular decorations) to put
everywhere.
They were red and white, and we put them around all the ice-cream
research
posters, and around the clock and around the door on the outside.
Some
people made tablecloths to put on the desks, which were arranged into
tables. For the newspaper game, I remember we wallpapered the walls
with
travel posters. For the tunnel game we didn't have to decorate the
inside
of the classroom, but on the outside we made these posters to look
scary,
with pictures of monsters and blood on them, and we made those paper
flowers to put around the door, of course. For just about every event
we
did, we would make these little 3-D paper stars and hang them from the
ceiling by thread. They look neat. During all of this, people stay
late
after school, sometimes as late as 8 o'clock on the day before it's to
open. We also had to get the ice-cream delivered (and a freezer to
put it
in) get the ice-cream scoopers, and arrange for someone to bring a
boom
box and tapes. During bunkasai there are tape players everywhere
playing
all kinds of hit songs etc. Also we had to decide what to wear. You
have
to wear your uniform, but on that day you can wear a sweatshirt or
sweater
of your choice over it.

We also decided who would work what shifts. Finally everything was
ready... and I will have to tell you the rest later as I have a bus to
catch!

Thank you for reading this... the continuation is on the way.

Maiko Covington maiko@ucsd.edu All replies should be to my
e-mail.

Hello, this is Maiko Covington again to say more about Japanese
schools.
This time I am going to talk about an 'event' that only happens once
in a
while - the field trip, or 'ensoku'. Once again I offer my standard
disclaimer: I have had no training whatsoever in psychology or

related
fields, so all opinions posted here are strictly my own. Happy
reading!

ENSOKU

About every couple of months or so, there is an ensoku. Ensoku
literally
means 'far feet', and often (especially in elementary school) ensoku
are
actually 'field trips', involving hiking. The first (and a big) part
of
ensoku is the preparation. On ensoku, you are supposed to bring your
lunch
(again, a cute plastic box full of rice and vegetables, or maybe some
onigiri <rice balls> . On this day, everyone gets their mother to
make a
lunch they especially like), a thermos full of something to drink, and
perhaps the most important thing, some 'okasi', or treats. Picking
the
okasi you will take is the major part of preparing for ensoku. See,
the
teacher sets some price, say 500 yen, and you have to stay under that
limit. So, everyone tries to get the most candy possible for that
price.
On the day before an ensoku, the discount groceries are packed with
people
trying to get the most for their money. There is a certain way to pick
what to take. First, you want to get something cheap and large and
liked
by everyone. Usually this ends up being some sort of chip. This is
for
trading. Then, you get some thing that you really like, and with the
rest
of the money you try to get as many small candies as possible. One
option
that is really popular is the 'hundred yen bag'. These are little
bags
that are 100 yen no matter how much candy you put in it. They are
clear
plastic, usually around 20 cm by 10 or so. So, you stretch this bag
as
much as possible before putting anything in it, and then as you put
each
item in, you press it as far as it can go into the corner of the bag,
and
generally cram it all in to save space. You have to be able to close
the
bag, which closes like a 'ziplock' bag. Sometimes the bag will break
when

you try to fill it, and then you have to start over. You don't have to pay for empty broken bags. When your bag is finally full to the way you want it, you go to the register hoping it won't break on the way there. The reason you go to a bargain grocery like Daiei or Maruetu is that at those places stuff that is usually 100 yen is use (oops) usually 84 yen or so, and you can more for your 500 yen. The cheap places are usually well known to all and get really crowded.

The next thing you have to get is your thermos. The most popular things to bring are mugi-tya and 'carupisu', which is a sort of sweet carbonated milk drink. You know how to make tea, right? Well, the carupis is similar – it comes in a bottle of thick syrup to which you have to add water. For any drink you bring, you have to make it more 'koi' or thick than usual, because you put ice in it. Before drinking it, you shake it up well to mix it. All these thermos are like the lunch stuff I explained in the first post – cute, with pictures of anime characters and such on it. Lots of people pack all this stuff in cute little bags, also with anime characters on it.

Another important thing is deciding where you are going to sit on the bus. Just about every ensoku, you go to the place by bus. Just like the seating charts in the classroom, this is usually decided by drawing numbers out of a hat or some such method. Where you sit is important – you want to be near your friends so you can trade your carefully selected okasi and gossip. You don't want to be next to anyone who gets remotely bus sick.

On ensoku, you have to wear your school uniform. If you are in elementary school, you probably don't have a uniform, but you have to wear your school hat and the name tag that pins to your sweater. On some

ensoku (like the hiking ones) you have to wear your gym suit. If any of you have been to Japan, I am sure you have run into the hordes of uniformed children at places like temples etc. That's ensoku! Before ensoku, the teachers usually will check your uniform strictly to make sure you aren't wearing anything that is against school rules. I got into big trouble here once - it was high school second year, before we were to go on the week-long "syuugaku ryokoo" (I'll explain about that later). Because it was winter, we had to wear the winter uniform, which was a dark blue pleated skirt (oops, I meant third year - gomen ne), same color vest, same color blazer, and a white shirt. Well, one of the teachers who I didn't like too much to begin with remarked in a condescending voice, "From the back it looks like you dyed your hair." This is true; in winter uniform you don't see much skin, so from the back the only thing that looked not-Japanese about me was my mousy brown hair. Well, I made another bad judgement and shot back, "Well, what do you want me to do, dye it black?" Oh, I got in trouble for that one... more sitting on the knees in the hall - ow. They also make sure that you wear your hair according to school rules, although lots of people change it once they get on the bus and get yelled at later. Let's face it, most people don't like to wear 2 ponytails in high school.

The places and activities on ensoku are all supposed to have some sort of educational value. In the lower grades this can be just a hike in the woods to gather seeds, and you study them in science when you get back. Usually after an ensoku you have to write an essay about what you did in kokugo class when you get back. In elementary school we sometimes get together and make a 'newspaper' about the activities or some sort of group project like that, but by high school you usually have to write something about what you saw, and how it relates to history, or maybe something about people you saw and how they represent Japanese people, you know, more 'term paper' type stuff. Elementary school children often go to places like planetariums and zoo as well. You can tell them because they

all wear matching hats and carry cute little backpacks with their supplies in it. Junior high and high school students go to places like museums, temples (oh, if I see another temple I will just...), places of historical battles or events, castles, and the peace memorial. Everyone is supposed to visit either the Nagasaki or Hiroshima peace memorial before they graduate. Usually this is done on the syuugaku ryokoo.

At all of these places, either the teacher or a tour guide provided by the attraction leads you around and gives a talk on the significance of the place. Mostly we listen with half an ear, and get into groups of friends and talk. Actually, more fun than the trip itself is the bus trip, where you get to sit with friends and eat lots of okasi, and trade okasi so you get lots of different kinds. Lunch is a big deal too for the same reason. The main prohibition on these trips was: no walkmans allowed. See, sometimes there is a talk given on the bus too, and they want us to listen to it. Often in the upper grades, like high school, on the bus trip back you get to do karaoke on the bus. That was always fun.. except once on my high school syuugaku ryokoo when a demented tour guide thought it was cool that I was American, and made me sing the "Star Spangled Banner" without music... ^_^ The buses you use for long trips like syuugaku ryokou are tour bus type, and a lot of them have the karaoke system built in. Often the bus guide (if there is one) will make us learn traditional songs from whatever area we are in. These are invariably enka type stuff, and are exceedingly hard to sing.

Once at the place we are going to, some of the things we do (as I started to say before – gomen) are look at the people from other schools, talk, go to the 'baiten' (gift shop), and mainly TAKE LOTS AND LOTS OF PICTURES. Mostly we take pictures of our friends. Since you obviously can't take a picture with yourself in it, when we get the pictures developed, we put them all in albums, and pass these around to the whole class. People who want a print write their name beside the picture they want. Most camera stores have something like yakimasi (prints) 30-40 yen

each (or at least, in '88 they did!). These pictures become real conversation pieces, with people shrieking, "oh, look at that one! My face..." or "oh, look at Ya-chan!" etc etc... Lots of inside jokes originate with these pictures. At the baiten, we often buy keychains or something like that that say the name of the place on it. These are sold at every attraction. Often they are metal keychains or "mascot" with the name imprinted there, and cute little characters on it. These we put on our schoolbags when we get back. If it's a temple, often we buy "gakugyou omamori", which are "study/work amulets". These always say the name of the temple you bought it at on it. These are also put on the schoolbag, but are a little more serious. Also, whenever you go on a trip, Japanese custom is that you have to get 'omiyage' for your family who didn't go. On ensoku too people buy omiyage a lot. Usually this is food from the area you went to, or a tea cup, or maybe ear cleaners, or something like that. Also we buy a food (like mochi, or maybe takoyaki) there to eat ourselves, if we are allowed to.

One other thing we do if it is a temple or some such with high stairs: always we count the stairs. Sometimes there are as many as 250 or more, and when we get to the top we see if we all got the same number. Often people will call out the numbers as they climb - "nihyakusanjyuu! nihyakusanjyuuiti!" etc. Everywhere you go there is usually these wooden markers saying what everything is, and we read those out loud too. Sometimes we laugh at them. Often there is a garden too, and we always have to in there, mostly for the teachers' benefit. If there are carp, we feed them. Another thing: often lots of the old temples or castles we go to look like they could have ghosts, and sometimes we try to scare each other.

One thing that usually happened if there was a tour guide was that the tour guide would try to read everyone's names (she would have a copy

of
the bus seating chart to take attendance). See, some people have
strange
kanji which are hard to read, or that can be read more than one way.
I
always loved it when the tour guide would try to read my name and
usually
not make it. 'Maiko' was no problem – it's Japanese. But 'Covington'
caused trouble. In Japanese I write it in katakana (ew!)
'Kobinguton',
which is six kanas, and most people couldn't read it. I mean,
Americans
often can't say Japanese or Vietnamese names even when they're written
in
"English" letters, right? Same thing like that.

Sometimes I would get irritated when we went to a big temple with lots
of American tourists, because they would start taking my picture and
saying in SLOW, LOUD English, "Do you underSTAND ME??" and then to
their
companion, fast, "hey, come look at this" and then stuff like "are you
JapaNESE??? How come you speak JapaNESE?? Do you understand ENGLISH??"
or
else they would ask for directions, like, "Can you tell me where the
TRAIN
station is?? TRAIN STAtion." Some people were cool though, and treated
me
like a normal person, and then my friends would gather around to hear
me
speak English and gasp (in Japanese of course), "Oh, your English is
SO
good! How come?? You're so lucky..." etc. etc. That was okay though.
Sometimes they would spot a white tourist, push me up to talk to him
or
her, and then it would turn out the tourist was French or something
and
I'd have to explain... Another thing that sometimes happened was
people
from other schools would want to take their picture with me. I kinda
felt
like a celebrity, but sometimes it would make me late for going with
my
group. Also I don't like being treated as an object...

If you are planning to be an American tourist, I have this advice. If
you come upon an ensoku group, try out your Japanese on the students.
They'll love it. They will also call their friends over and start a
fuss,
though. I think in general if you want to strike up a conversation
with a

Japanese on the street anywhere, even if you are planning to talk in English, start up the conversation with a bit of Japanese, even if it's just "konniti ha". They will appreciate it, and it will relax them a bit.

If you just start off in English, most people I think will get all nervous that their English isn't good and shy away.

Well, that's ensoku... I'll explain about the big ensoku "syuugaku ryokou" in a future post, if you'd like to hear... Here is one type of ensoku we had often though:

THOSE "GAIJIN PARTIES"

There is an international federation called UNESCO (I forget what it stands for, but maybe it was something like UN educational and science something or other). They have an office in Tokyo, and several times a

year they would hold a party for all the foreigners living in Tokyo. Remember I said I was in the English club? Well, the English teacher running the club took advantage of this fact, and made us all go to these

parties. See, although I didn't live in Tokyo, my high school was within

the city limit, and so we went. Mostly there was just lots of potluck type

food, and people would just sit around talking. Well, as an assignment,

we had to write out these lists of questions and ask them to five people

in English, and record their replies. I used to hate doing this because I

could ask people questions just fine on my own without a sheet of paper

telling me what to say, but I was made to do the paper thing anyway. I remember once we ran into this one lady in a fur coat who said she used to

be a hand model in Osaka, and she took away my friend Yuki's paper and started reading it aloud and laughing in a big voice... Also she

started petting (yes, petting) me on the head and saying how "Japanese girls have

such soft hair", and I kept trying to tell her I was American.. that was

pretty lame. Most of the people were interesting though, and would have

pretty fun conversations.

I hope you enjoyed reading this long article... Any comments or

I had a very interesting time trying to figure out what this film was when I first saw an article on it in the December 1988 issue of Anime V. The magazine featured a pictorial spread on it. But its release was rather odd, since all the KOR TV series and the first "Color Postcard" OAV series were readily released on laserdisc first and video tape later. This KOR OAV was listed as the 3rd Color Postcard OAV. The first two Color Postcard OAVs featured the KOR cast going on vacation; a ski trip, and

the other OAV featuring a trip to Hawaii. This third episode was listed as featuring the cast's adventures on a wind surfing trip. But it the episode was brought out by JVC video, not the usual Toho Video, and would only be offered on video tape! Very strange!

It was only very recently that JVC started to manufacture some of their titles on laserdisc, and I do not collect anime tapes. So, I let this video episode go. But it always bugged me that there was an episode of KOR that I had not seen, and I was always confused by it's odd release. In the mean time I had learned that JVC had owned the rights to KOR early in it's audio and video career, but they had given them up soon after the TV series got underway. (They had also released a KOR Image album.) Interesting. I thought that perhaps now that the TV series was over and popular, JVC was using its remaining options to get a slice of the OAV pie. As it turned out, this was partially true.

A couple months ago, some folks had posted messages on CIS describing the release of a new KOR OAV called the "Kimagure Orange Road - Jump Video." The interesting thing about it was that it was not a part of the current OAV series releases. Rather it was a video being offered by yet another video company, Pioneer! Since this was from Pioneer, I began to wonder if they had somehow gotten the rights to the video that JVC had released. But it was strange that nobody was calling it the 3rd Color Postcard video. Of course, I had to get this thing and find out just what it was! As it turns out, it was the same "OAV" that was featured in the Anime V article and released by JVC. But they weren't selling it as the KOR pilot film! Pioneer, bless 'em, were calling it what it actually was. Whew!

So, what's the pilot film like? The film is a wonderful "must-see" experience for any Orange Road fan. It is an fascinating look at another interpretation of the KOR manga as an animated story. It features a plot taken from about the middle of the KOR story, and it highlights the

characters Kyosuke, Madoka, Hikaru, Yousaku, and Kazuya and their adventures on a tropical vacation.

In the story the young Kazuya hatches a plan with Yousaku that will have Mikauru catch Kyosuke in the shower with Madoka. Thus making Hikaru loose interest in her "Darling" and give Yousaku a chance at her at last. (After gallantly beating up Kyosuke again.) The plan of switching the numbers between Kyosuke's and Madoka's cabana huts comes close to succeeding, but Kyosuke and Madoka escape and end up going scuba diving at night. An odd and of course dangerous idea which gives Kyosuke the chance to save Madoka again. A lot of other really funny things happen, but I don't want to spoil everything!

For the KOR fan, the differences in this film, and the TV/OAV series are interesting in ways that are both subtle and blatantly obvious. The biggest obvious difference is apparent right on the cover of the disc. Instead of the traditional Akemi Takada water color cover illustration, we are presented with a striking, vivid, and sexy portrait of Madoka as a rock singer in an outfit that makes her look like a cross between Priss from Bubblegum Crisis, and Eve from Megazone 23 that has been drawn by KOR creator Matsumoto.

The opening title sequence for the show is also different. The innovative opening and closing titles that were present in the later TV show are not reflected in any way here. The opening and closing title sequences in the pilot film are rather tame, and feature some rather mellow but catchy pop tunes in place of the kinetic pop and rock tunes that were featured on TV. And of course you will also notice that the voice actors and character designs are very different too! The voices actors were changed for the TV series. I thought most of the cast for the pilot film did a good job with the exception of the voice for Kyosuke which is pretty high pitched and a little too whiney sounding. Character designs also changed. Even though both the TV show and this pilot film had the same character designer, it is evident that some revisions were made. The characters here are drawn a bit younger and shorter looking than

their

TV counterparts. They must have been changed for the TV show to make them

look older as the kids here don't look like they're in their middle teens.

The other changes in character designs are more subtle; the eye and hair

color combinations are different, and you can even see a minor difference

in the way eyelashes are drawn on the male characters if you look closely

enough. (Picky, picky, I know.)

The last major difference between the pilot film and the KOR TV show comes in the form of the direction of the show. It's obvious that had this

creative group of folks continued on to do the TV series, the emphasis would have been on comedy. The lingering scenes of introspection focusing

on Kyosuke are gone. In fact, at times, this film's direction plays with

all the broad comic energy of a Project A-ko film!

For the KOR fan, this film is a lot of fun just to see how the show could have turned out. It's not bad. It's pretty different though, and I

think because of the lack of emotional pathos this show would not have gone on to become the classic that it is had this creative staff continued

with the show. Urusei Yatsura, and other shows have already charted these

romantic comedy waters before. Perhaps that was the thinking behind all

the final changes. For animation buffs, this video also is a wonderful look into the creative process, and how two different groups of artists

can look at the same source story and interpret it in different ways.

Take

a look at the pilot film version of the 99.5 steps scene as an example!

(I'd also like to note that the video transfer on this film is superb. It's one of the clearest looking anime laserdiscs that I have ever seen!

Plus it's been mastered in full-featured CAV mode for clean stills and random access of all frames of the film. And although the film has a mono

soundtrack, digital sound is used on the disc. Pioneer video is to be congratulated on the quality and attention to detail spent on this short

video.)

- Tom Mitchell

KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD - UNEXPECTED SITUATION (ON LASERDISC FROM TOHO VIDEO, TTL-2175, 4,944 YEN) KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD - MESSAGE IN ROUGE (ON LASERDISC FROM TOHO VIDEO, TTL-2172, 4,944 YEN)

Word has it that these two videos are the last Kimagure Orange Road animation to be produced. That's too bad. The KOR OAV series certainly hasn't covered all of the stories in the the KOR manga. And its such a good series too, with a great blend of comedy and romantic emotion. I will miss Kimagure Orange Road very much.

So, if these are to be the last videos, then these two final episodes present us with two sides of classic KOR: Silly romantic fun with the funny Unexpected Situation story, and classic KOR pathos with the sad Message in Rouge episode.

In the Unexpected Situation Kyosuke's lesbian cousin Akane comes for another visit. She's still drooling over Madoka, but has be careful because her school friends are with her. Her friends don't believe that

Akane has an interest in boys, much less a boy friend. So, she begs Kyosuke to be that boyfriend while her friends are here. Her friends don't believe them, as it looks like they could be cousins or something.

So, they have the couple do all sorts of things that would prove to them

that they are going together. One night while they are at Akane's house,

Akane is drunk and fed up with their stupid tests. She promises that she

will give them what they really want! She'll take Kyosuke to bed with her! Meanwhile, as they are in her bedroom, Kyosuke's sisters and his girlfriend Madoka arrive at Akane's house for a visit...

In Message in Rouge, Madoka's famous concert performing dad is in town for a concert. Madoka, who is very proud of her father, treats everyone to

the show to see him perform. After the show, she goes alone to take a bouquet of flowers to her father in his dressing room. When she arrives,

she hears him kiss another woman...not her mother, who did not come on this trip. Madoka abruptly leaves for home, and everyone senses something

is wrong. When Madoka arrives home here sister has her check the messages

on the answering machine and she finds a message stating that their

father
won't be coming home after the show, but that he'll be staying at a
local
hotel. Madoka is upset and decides to run away from home. She packs
her
things, and scribbles a message on her mirror with a lip-stick saying
good-bye and thank you to her father. As she walks through the park,
she
remembers the day she met Kyosuke there and runs to him. Meanwhile,
Kyosuke is home alone and, over an un-appetising meal of instant
noodles,
daydreams how he wishes Madoka were with him, and wonders what it
would be
like if they were married...

I really enjoyed both of these episodes a lot. Both are very well
done,
and will delight any KOR fan. Together, the both contain a little bit
of
everything that makes Orange Road such an interesting comedy/romance
series.

There are several things I'd like to note on these videos. First,
there's
a lot of new background music! Once again, we have some BGM not on any
of
the albums. There's enough now from the OAV series and the TV series
that's unreleased to do another album! I really hope another one is
done
someday! On the same topic, it's interesting to note that the Message
in
Rouge video makes use of the some of the music from the KOR movie.
Nice
touch. Once again, technically these productions are excellent. Good
production values in the animation and sound, and great laserdisc
pressings using all the features of the format. It should be noted
that
Unexpected Situation has a flaw in its picture; a couple small grey
smudges on the lens of the animation camera! An odd error that is
visible
in any light colored scenes throughout the entire video. It might not
show
up on tape as well, but laserdiscs really point out this flaw. It can
be
seen in the lower right hand quadrant of the frame. It won't ruin this
excellent video for you though. Technically, everything else is top-
notch!

While on on the topic I must comment on TOHO Video's marketing of
these

episodes. It was downright cruel to us loyal KOR fans. Release of the laserdiscs of these episodes were held up over 6 months! This was done to stimulate collectors into buying the KOR OAV/MOVIE laserdisc boxed set, which contains the movie and all the OAV episodes on LD. The tapes for these last two episodes were release late in 1990. Always before, us LD buyers got our discs at the same time as the tapes. Not this time. For those of us who have been buying the series on individual discs since it came out, we were forced to wait 6 months or buy the redundant collectors set if we wanted to own the new episodes. Shame on you TOHO!

- Tom Mitchell

AD POLICE FILE 1 - PHANTOM LADY (On laserdisc, NRLL-1021/C.Moon VideoY7800/40 minutes/CLV/Digital Stereo)

AD 2027, a young Leon McNichols has a near fatal encounter with a beautiful, but deadly, female buma. He barely escapes with his life.

Chinatown..., a buma goes berserk in a restaurant. The MegaTokyo Police have a difficult time subduing the buma. Many of the 'normal' police are killed. The MegaTokyo ADPolice, show up to remedy the situation. In the ranks of the ADPolice are Geena Malso, Aruth, and the rookie Leon McNichols. While dealing with the buma, Leon makes a mistake that costs Aruth his life. The ADPolice finally stop the buma and destroy the restaurant in the process.

Later, Leon apologizes to Geena for screwing up his assignment. Geena explains to Leon that "she can't wait to have men after seeing blood" and starts to kiss him. Unfortunately for Geena, Leon has a flashback of the buma he encountered when he was in the 'normal' police. And to make matters worse, an insurance agent enters with some news on Aruth's death.

At the bar, the insurance agent explains that Aruth has taken out a rather large insurance policy in case of his death. The insurance company refuses to pay the insurance claim. There were people who saw Aruth with the buma earlier and the insurance company surmises that Aruth's death

was suicide instead of murder. Leon, on the other hand, speculates that there was something wrong with the buma's mental functions. If Leon and Geena can prove that other bumaz of the same type also exhibit the defect, the insurance will be paid. In another part of a bar, a mysterious woman breaks the hand of a local thug and silently leaves the bar.

In a seedier part of MegaTokyo, Geena contacts a local informant for info on buma regeneration plants. The informant produces a list and also explains that many bumaz are also used as prostitutes. Evidently, hormones produced during sex destroys the bumaz bio-chips and cause them to go berserk.

Geena and Leon begin their investigation of the buma regeneration plants with little success. Unknown to them, they are being shadowed by the woman from the bar...

Leon decides to split up and investigate alone. In a dimly lit street, the mysterious woman makes her presence known. Leon doesn't recognize her as the buma he killed many years ago when he was in the MegaTokyo Normal Police.

In a rundown regeneration plant, Geena is pressing the owner to admit that he has been regenerating bumaz illegally. At gunpoint, he finally admits to regenerating bumaz without the proper license. He shows Geena a list of all the bumaz he has regenerated. Geena recognizes one of the bumaz as the mysterious woman from the bar. The owner plays back a bit of her memory that would not erase. The video monitor shows an image of Leon covered in blood. Geena realizes that Leon is in big trouble.

Leon finally realizes who the woman is and barely escapes her first attempt on his life. Firing his revolver, the impact throws the buma through a plate glass window. The buma lies in a crumpled heap. She's still wearing the same lingerie as she did so many years ago. Leon goes over to see if she's really dead. Suddenly, she lunges at Leon. Startled, Leon manages to shoot a spotlight on the roof, which promptly

drops and breaks his leg. In desperation, Leon shoots again and again, but the buma doesn't stop. In the end, it's Geena who saved the day as she dispatches the buma.

The next part of the disk is the dubbed the 'MegaTokyo Mix'. It's a series of music videos done to the music of Lou Bonnevie, and using video clips from the BubbleGum Crisis OAV series. The first video, titled 'Heartbreaker', shows Leon in his fight against wild buma and Genom agents. The next video, 'What I Fool I am', has clips mostly from BGC 5: MoonLight Rambler. 'Rocking the Beat' wraps up the MegaTokyo Mix, with clips from BGC 4: Revenge Road.

As a whole, I thought the AD Police File-1 disc was very well done. The animation style had a more "softer" look than the BubbleGum Crisis OAVs. It was interesting to note that the buma designs were very different from the BubbleGum Crisis buma designs. They were closer to the Blade Runner look, that probably had a lot to do with the whole BubbleGum Crisis/AD Police world, anyway. Another note, I might add, is that this story is roughly based on the 'MeatSauce Ecstasy' story in the Tony Takezaki manga 'AD Police 25:00'.

- Albert Wong

GUNDAM 0083 - EPISODE 1 "STARDUST RISING" (STARDUST MEMORIES 1 ON LASERDISC, BANDAI/EMOTION VIDEO, Y4800)

As another addition to the line of Gundam videos, Gundam 0083: Stardust Memories, is another side story of the Gundam timeline. The first disc starts off with the Jion forces abandoning the asteroid base Abowaku. The Abowaku base was also the site of the final battle of the One Year War. The Jion fleet retreats into the darkness of space.

The scene shifts to a ruined city, A Federation GM mobile suit is engaged in combat with three Jion Zaku mobile suits. As the battle progresses, it appears that the battle is really a training exercise complete with paint marking weapons. The simulation is called off

when
one of the Zaku suits is damaged.

In flight, the White Base class carrier Pegasus nears the Australian coast and the Federation base Albion. Aboard Anaheim System Engineer Nina

Purpleton and two prototype Gundam mobile suits. The Pegasus flies over
the site of the British Operation. During the One Year War, the Jion forces launched a orbiting space colony at the Federation base at Jabro.

Unfortunately for the people of Australia, the space colony missed its target and formed a rather large crater on the Australian coast. The Pegasus is unaware that they are being observed by a small group of Jion
mobile suits. A Jion submarine also waits nearby.

At the Albion base, Ensign Chuck Keith is doing pushups. Evidently, it
was Chuck that damaged the Zaku mobile suit during the training exercise

earlier. The Pegasus makes a rather impressive landing at the base. Kou

and Chuck decide to check out the Pegasus and the two prototype Gundams.

The Gundam prototypes are at Albion for testing and evaluation.

In the Pegasus hangar, Kou and Chuck are amazed at the Gundams. The first Gundam prototype, model RX78GP01 resembles the stock RX78 Gundam that was very successful in the One Year War. The second Gundam prototype, the model RX78GP02 is very different. Equipped with a nuclear

bazooka, large verniers, and specialized shield. As they look closer at

the prototypes, they attract the attention of Nina Purpleton. She introduces herself as an Anaheim system engineer. Chuck immediately starts to brag about being an ace pilot and tries to get a date with Nina.

Fortunately for Nina, her friend and mechanic for the Gundams, Muala Bashit shows up. Chuck ends up with a date with Muala...

In another part of the base, the captain of the Pegasus and the base commander enter a restricted part of the base. The security system includes a retina scan, palmprint and secret code. The base commander successfully complete all the tests and they enter the restricted area.

At the base cafeteria, Lt. South Burning and fellow pilots discuss the new GM Backpack they were testing earlier in the day. The GM Backpack gives an ordinary GM mobile suit enhanced speed and maneuverability.

At

Lt. Burnings invitation, Nina and Maula join the pilots. Nina abruptly leaves the table when she notices one of the pilots staring at her.

A mechanic from the Pegasus returns to the base. Unknown to the guard at the gate, the mechanic has smuggled in another passenger. Inside the Pegasus hangar, the base commander and the captain of the Pegasus witness

the loading of the second prototype Gundams nuclear bazooka. Kou and Chuck

wander around the hangar, trying to get another look at the Gundams. Nina

shooes them away. Disappointed, they begin leaving the Pegasus. They salute a Federation officer, who asks them if the 'GP02 nuclear bazooka

has been loaded. After, Kou tells him yes, the officer quickly takes a

lift and begins to enter the 'GP02 prototype. Nina is shocked to see someone stealing one of 'her' Gundams. The 'GP02 powers up and begins to

exit the Pegasus. Kou grabs the first Gundam prototype and attempts to go

after the thief. The officer stealing the Gundam introduces himself as Anavel Gato, an ace Jion pilot and slices his way out the Pegasus hangar

with the 'GP02 beam saber. Simultaneously, a missile barrage devastates

the Albion base. Kou, in the 'GP01 leaves the Pegasus and pursues the 'GP02. Elsewhere on the base, Lt. Burning and the other pilots are preparing to defend the base with their test suits. Chuck yells to them

that a Jion spy has stolen the second Gundam prototype. A Jion Rick Dom

mobile suit suddenly appears. The Jion pilot is surprised to see that the

Federation is using Zaku mobile suits. Using his beam saber, he easily

cuts the Zaku in half. Chuck is petrified as he sees the Zaku explode.

Anavel Gato prepares for his escape as Kou shows up in the second Gundam.

Kou draws his beam saber and prepares for battle...

Episode 2 "War is Not Over, Yet"

Anavel Gato initiates the attack by quickly drawing his beam saber and rushing Kou. Being an inexperienced pilot, Kou is surprised and his Gundam takes a beating. Anavel realizes that he is fighting a amateur

pilot and leaves because it wouldn't have been a fair fight. Another missile attack rocks the base. On a nearby hill, the Xamel unhooks its cannon and fires at the base. The first shot is a miss, but the second shot strikes home, destroying the base command center. The main Jion attack is over, Kou is joined by Lt. Burning, Chuck and another pilot. Chuck is in his Zaku, Lt. Burning and the remaining pilot have the Federation GM mobile suit. They go off in search of the Gundam.

A Jion shuttle begins its re-entry. Its mission, to rendezvous with Anavel Gato and the 'GP02.

Back at base, the results of the Jion attack is revealed. Dead Federation mobile suits litter that base. Nina with Maula chase after both Gundams. Nina is so preoccupied with finding the Gundams that she almost runs into a dead mobile suit.

The Federation team continues the search. Lt. Burning decides to split up the team to speed the search. Burning and Kou take the high road, Chuck and the other pilot take the low road. Chuck's team finds the shuttle first and is about to fire, when the Rick Dom makes a surprise attack, destroying the GM mobile suit. Simultaneously, the Xamel attacks Lt. Burning's team with a missile barrage. Lt. Burning fends off the Xamel while Kou takes out the shuttle.

Smoke and flame from the downed shuttle fill the area. Surprisingly, the 'GP02 flies out from amidst the smoke. Anavel Gato is a tad pissed because he lost his ride home. Anavel decides to finish his fight with Kou here and now, but the Rick Dom shows up and reminds Anavel that he has a submarine to catch. Lt. Burning, Kou and Chuck continue the search knowing that the rendezvous point must be nearby.

A fog forms in the morning sunlight. Another team from Albion searches for the Gundam. In the fog, they are easily ambushed and destroyed. On a nearby Jion submarine, the captain sees the explosions in the fog, and prepares to launch a small mobile suit hover sled.

Using their mobile suit computers, Lt. Burning, Chuck, and Kou manage to deduce the probable rendezvous point for the stolen Gundam. They proceed

into the fog.

Suddenly, explosions are seen in the thick fog. Lt. Burnings team is caught in another Jion ambush. Chuck fires, but in the fog, he manages to shoot up a rock. Kou counterattacks, neatly slicing the Rick Dom's bazooka. The Rick Dom manages to cut the head off of Chuck's mobile suit, blinding it. Luckily, Chuck manages to evade the Rick Dom's attack and destroys it with the Zaku's heat axe. The Xamel fights a delaying action in order for Gundam to escape. Again, Kou and Anavel square off for a fight. The fight commences with only the light from the beam sabers shining through the fog. Anavel manages to get the upper hand and is about to destroy the first Gundam prototype. Kou, with Nina's advice, stabs the 'GP02's shield with his beam saber. The shield releases the energy of the beam saber out of four large vents. Seeing the display of light and smoke, Anavel decides to flee once again and manages to rendezvous with the waiting submarine.

With the battle over, Chuck runs to Lt. Burning's GM mobile suit. The Xamel is disabled and Lt. Burning is badly injured. Nina drives up to the Gundam and sees Kou, standing on the Gundam outstretched hand, weeping as the morning sun rises.

Gundam 0083 looks like it is going to be another successful line of OAVs. The storyline is well paced. There is the right amount of action and character development. I thought the scene where Kou was correcting Chuck's Japanese very amusing. (^_^) If you are a avid Gundam fan, you won't want to miss this OAV series. IF you are not a Gundam fan, then this is a good a place as any to start.

– Albert Wong

[illegible]

RANMA 1/2 - D0C0 * FIRST CD (ON COMPACT DISC, PONY CANYON PCCG-00142)

The latest Ranma 1/2 CD is the 'Doco*First' CD. The voice actresses for Akane, Nabiki, Kasumi, Shampoo, and Ranma-chan have formed a new singing group.

Most of the songs on the CD can be classified as 'bouncy J-pop songs'. There are a few exceptions, though. The first track is a 38 second BGM of some, rather, melancholy music. The third track has Happosai and Soun talking in the background. The fifth track has an interesting bass track.

Could almost be a rap song. (^_^) The last track, has the girls of DoCo just talking while the music plays in the background. Aside from the more weirder tracks (the one with Happosai) I like this disc. It makes a good disc for light listening situations like homework, writing reviews, etc.
(^_^)

The CD package itself, is something worth mentioning. The CD doesn't come in the standard plastic jewel box like most CD. Instead Pony Canyon uses a three-way 'Gate Fold' package. There is a picture of DoCo on the cover. Another unusual addition is that the picture on the front is actually an acetate cel. Inside is a plastic package with cels of Akane, Nabiki, Kasumi, Shampoo and Ranma-Chan. You can slide the default cel out of the CD and put another cel to 'customize' your CD package. One note of caution though, these acetate cels scratch easily, so don't throw the cd package around. Luckily, the CD also comes with a resealable plastic bag.

- Albert Wong

PATLABOR PHASE III - ORIGINAL TELEVISION SOUNDTRACK (ON COMPACT DISC, VAP RECORDS, VPCG-80399, 2,000 YEN)

This is the latest and 3rd soundtrack music collection from the popular Patlabor TV series. It features music created by Kenji Kawai; a guy who certainly seems to be having a good time doing music on the show based on the sound he brings to Patlabor. Much like the TV series itself the mostly synth-pop sound of this album ranges from fun (video game themes, and intermission break music) to dramatic. The sound is high-tech, full,

synth

work. The music here also features music from the OAV continuation of the

TV series, and we get a couple of pretty good opening and ending theme songs. The best being the opening theme song for the OAV series;

Condition

Green.

I decided to check this one out after all the great comments the

Patlabor

TV BGM albums were getting on CompuServe. The album is very good, and

I

guess the best thing I can say about it is that I plan to check out the

other volumes too!

- Tom Mitchell

SILENT MOBIUS - THE MOTION PICTURE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ALBUM (ON COMPACT

DISC, VICTOR RECORDS, VICL-178, 3,000 YEN)

Silent Mobius was certainly one of the most eagerly anticipated anime films

of 1991. And of course many of us are still waiting to see it as the film

is not yet available on video. But the soundtrack album is out and has been

for some time. What does the album sound like? Well, as Anime Stuff staff

member Albert Wong told me, it is not what you would expect.

Based on the Kikuchi manga Silent Mobius, the film is a high-tech Blade

Runner-like adventure film about a group of specialized female police officers that are members of a Tokyo Police unit that investigates supernatural crimes. The type of music one might suspect would show up here

would fall somewhere between Blade Runner's moody jazz and Bubblegum Crisis' rock. But surprisingly, and refreshingly, it is neither.

Rather,

this album features a wonderful all digital score of moody, Gothic, full

orchestra compositions that sound like a soundtrack for (as Albert suggested) a Conan the Barbarian movie. Some of it also reminded me of some

of the darker moments of John Williams' score for Close Encounters of the

Third Kind.

– Tom Mitchell

CRYING FREEMAN BOOK THREE VOLUME 1 ENGLISH MANGA TRANSLATION
(PUBLISHED
BY VIZ)

The issue itself still has the same lustful portions of gratuitous sex, violence, and intrigue that Crying Freeman always has. And I must say that the person who did the colorizing did a wonderful job considering the already shaded monochrome source. But geez, I wanted to read this story translated and presented close to the original medium that Japanese fans read it in. I really was fascinated by the artists use of black and white manga drawing techniques to convey the story. The art was stunning enough on its own. But of course that's all changed now the comic has been Ted

Turner-ized. I had been thinking of getting the original Crying Freeman manga just to explore the translations. And now I think I really will get the original Japanese version just so I can see it presented the way it was intended. I suppose if VIZ bought the Louvre museum, they'd repaint the Mona Lisa nude, just so more Americans would appreciate it.

- Tom Mitchell

GO! GO! SABERS BY TAKIO KAZUKA (MANGA PUBLISHED BY BANDAI, 144 PAGES, 780 YEN, ISBN4-89189-139-4 C0079)

Not a manga that I'd recommend to anyone else except for Bubblegum Crisis fans. GO! GO! Sabers is a well drawn manga that has a lot of trouble deciding what it is; For most of the time it's a spoof of Bubblegum Crisis featuring some stupid/cute stories, and some of the time it presents some good drama, though not outstanding.

Other than the decent art, the manga features stories like Linna's date on a blimp, Priss dealing with a crooked manager at a gig, ect. Cute. Stupid. The best story, Physical Hero, features Silia's brother Macky in a tale that takes place at a health club where he foils a robbery attempt as the Knight Sabers girls work out.

On the whole, the manga's pretty fluffy. I'd have trouble recommending it unless you'd want to see what a "cute" Bubblegum Crisis would be like. Truly a bubblegummy manga. For funny BGC, it's best to stick with Tony Takezaki's wry treatments in his AD POLICE mangas.

- Tom Mitchell

HALFLING - THE RANMA 1/2 NEWSLETTER (PUBLISHED BY CHRIS SWETT, AROUND 15 PAGES, \$1.00 COVER PRICE FOR ISSUE 3 USED IN THIS REVIEW.)

Yep, a newsletter devoted entirely to the subject of Rumiko Takahashi's wild manga and TV series Ranma 1/2. More than just another fan based newsletter, this publication is a true collectible for fans because of its utility; it features probably the best written plot synopsis' ever

assembled for the TV show so far!

Featuring adaptations of Hitoshi Doi's wonderful synopsis work, and liberally sprinkled with illustrations scanned by Chris, you can practically picture the story in your head! And each issue features new synopsis' in chronological order to the series. Issue 3 featured episodes 72 to 78 for example.

Perhaps the one problem with this publication is the lack of information about who publishes it! Issue 3 had no mention of the publishers name or where he could be contacted. All this despite a large editorial and thank-you section. This newsletter needs a masthead! Or perhaps Chris is just a selfless kinda guy. After all, he is the only American publishing and selling his own fan publication, RANMA IN AMERICA, at the Japanese Comic Con.

- Tom Mitchell

//////////////////////////////////OTHER ANIME MERCHANDISE\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

BOOKS NIPPAN VIDEO CATALOG (AVAILABLE FROM BOOKS NIPPAN, \$3.00 OR FREE TO ANIMATION CLUB MEMBERS)

Depending on how you approach it, the new Books Nippan Video Catalog is a mixed blessing. The new desktop-published booklet format is nice. Simple, well laid out, and quite a sensible change from the over produced color catalogs that we are used to seeing from BN. The catalog itself is a bit of a shock for the anime fan as it does not list ANY original Japanese animation. Rather it is probably one of the most complete listings in one place that I have ever seen of dubbed or subtitled Japanese animation video tapes.

Like I said, this is a mixed blessing. It's nice to see a such a complete list of what it available in the US. The only problem is that 95% of the dubbed and subtitled Japanese animation offered in the US is crap. Anything brought over to this country gets run through a filter of

editors, bad voice actors, poor translators, and scissor happy producers. So for the true anime fan, the catalog reads like an anime graveyard. It would seem that Books Nippan is getting out of carrying ORIGINAL Japanese anime videos. This is not surprising, considering their terrible service reputation and pricing in this area.

Aside from the content of the products that it is selling, it is interesting to see just what is included in it. I do have one major protest about the content of the catalog though. Although it is fine that BN's US Renditions gets featured spots in the catalog with their own series of subtitled anime, they tend to toot their own horn when it comes to the descriptions of work done by their competition. In the description for Animeigo's MADOX-01 subtitled tape, they had this to say: "On the wave of US Renditions' groundbreaking subtitled videos Gunbuster and Dangaio, Animeigo presents Madox-01." That hardly seems fair. I would hardly think of Animeigo as riding US Renditions wave in the area of video subtitling. Both companies got their start at about the same time. And I doubt that Animeigo is in any way following US Renditions' example of cutting out original material or allowing goofy translation errors to creep in to their subtitles. If anything US Renditions should hop onto Animeigo's wave.

I'd recommend checking the catalog out. It's a handy reference, and will provide you with a list of just what is out there in terms of commercially done subtitled and dubbed anime films, and related genres. Just don't let the sight of seeing your favorite anime classics in hacked form with the titles changed get you down.

– Tom Mitchell

[illegible]

The biggest news this fall for anime fans has to be the announcement of a new Macross series being made. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the show, Macross will be continued as a multi-part OAV series. Because the new show will feature new characters and will be set far into the future of the original story, fans are having mixed reactions to the news. This is in light of the other disappointing sequels to anime classics made in the past year such as the sequels to Iczer-1, Megazone 23, and Gall Force.

Will the show turn out well? We'll all know when the show shows up in the middle of 1992. Haruhiko Mikimoto is one of few original Macross staff members returning to the production. One thing's for sure, I bet the music for the show will be nice. JVC/Victor would like to sell some more Macross Albums.

(LATE NEWS FLASH: US Renditions will be doing an authorized English dubbing of the new Macross series. It will be interesting to see how this one will turn out. Let's hope this turns out to be a quality project beyond our jaded expectations.)

- Tom Mitchell

//////////////////////////////////MAIL ORDER INFO\\////////////////////////////////

The following is a list of businesses where the ANIME STUFF staff members shop for our anime stuff. They are highly recommended sources for anime and provide excellent service. All of them provide mail order so you can write to them for catalogs.

SIGHT & SOUND 1275 MAIN STREET WALTHAM, MA 02154	NIKAKU ANIMART 615 North 6th. St. SAN JOSE, CA 95112	LASER PERCEPTIONS 1739 Noriega Street SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94122
PHONE: 1-617-894-8633	PHONE: 1-408-971-2822	PHONE: 1-415-753-2016

WOK TALK/SIGHT & SOUND and LASER PERCEPTIONS specialize in domestic and

imported laser video discs. Nikaku sells magazines, books, compact discs, laser discs and other anime goods. Tell 'em ANIME STUFF sent ya!

[illegible]

Here is a list of two of the more notable BBS's around the country that are dedicated mainly to anime chatter. These aren't all of the BBS systems out there that feature anime information, but these are two of the best and they should help lead you to other sources.

> VALLEY OF THE WIND BBS, the official ANIMAG BBS
Phone 1-415-341-5986 (CALIFORNIA, 300/1200/2400 BAUD)

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> ANIME LANE BBS
  Phone 1-818-762-3694 (CALIFORNIA, 300/1200 BAUD, Starlinkable
through
  Van Nuys Node)
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And don't forget the CompuServe Anime Group on the Comic Book & Animation forum!

[illegible]

If you're careful with your life, you can use it until you die.

– McCoy, Area 88

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